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Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, which has been prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/12, assesses progress in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and in mainstreaming gender into the operational activities of the United Nations development system.

The report draws on information from: 64 United Nations entities reporting under the Action Plan; the United Nations Development Group Information Management System; the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) results management system; and secondary sources.

It concludes with recommendations, for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council at its 2016 session, on how to support accelerated action on gender mainstreaming within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2015/12 of 10 June 2015, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Council at its 2016 session on the implementation of that resolution, including on progress made in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (hereinafter referred to as the System-wide Action Plan) and on the promotion of accountability at national and global levels. The present report responds to that request.

2. The report contains six sections. Section II, which follows the present introduction, discusses the normative gains won for gender equality and the empowerment of women in 2015; section III provides an overview of progress in the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan; section IV assesses progress in mainstreaming gender into all operational activities of the United Nations development system; section V examines the remaining gaps and challenges; and section VI presents conclusions and provides recommendations, for the consideration of the Council, on how to support accelerated action on gender mainstreaming within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. The report draws on four key sources of information: data provided by 64 United Nations entities reporting under the System-wide Action Plan, the United Nations Development Group Information Management System and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) results management system and data from secondary sources.[1]

II. Background

4. 2015 was a landmark year in terms of normative achievements in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women. With the convergence of major intergovernmental processes, the United Nations system and Member States reinforced their commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women in key outcome documents, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex); the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1); and the Paris Agreement, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its twenty-first session, held in Paris from 30 November to 13 December 2015 (see FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21).

5. For the first time, gender equality and the empowerment of women are anchored in the broader sustainable development, financing and climate change agenda and acknowledged as an indisputable prerequisite for achieving a just and equitable economic, social and environmental order. Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is not only a stand-alone goal but is also

[1] The submission deadline for the present report to the Economic and Social Council fell shortly after the deadlines for the reports of the United Nations country teams to the United Nations Development Group Information Management System, which has replaced the annual reports of the resident Coordinator. Incompleteness in respect of data availability adversely affected the analysis.

strongly recognized as a force multiplier across all goal areas: 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals have integrated gender-sensitive targets.

6. The publication of the global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)[2] and the adoption of Council resolution 2242 (2015) constituted important milestones for advancing women's leadership and gender equality in the international peace and security agenda. That women's participation boosts humanitarian assistance, enables the conclusion and sustainability of peace agreements, and facilitates economic recovery after conflict was recognized in both the global study and Council resolution 2242 (2015).

7. Collectively, these outcomes offer an unprecedented opportunity and durable foundation for strengthening the systematic mainstreaming of gender and the overall coherence of the normative and operational responses of the United Nations in all sectors, across all countries and in partnership with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including women's and community-based organizations, feminist groups, women human rights defenders, and girls' and youth-led organizations. These outcomes also give further impetus to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 of 21 December 2012 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in which the Assembly granted the United Nations development system an unequivocal mandate to mainstream gender into all policies and programmes, including through implementation of the System-wide Action Plan and coordination of gender-responsive operational activities at the country level.

8. As the United Nations system aligns its support for the localization and implementation of the universal, indivisible and integrated 2030 Agenda, systematically mainstreaming a gender perspective is increasingly critical for catalysing progress across all of the Sustainable Development Goals and realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by 2030. The gender-responsive implementation of the new agenda, as affirmed in the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixtieth session, requires accelerated action on new and long-standing commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It requires, inter alia, integrated and coordinated United Nations action on protecting and promoting the human rights of women and girls in development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts; eliminating discrimination and transforming laws and policies; ending violence against women; ensuring equal access of women and girls to quality education and health; promoting their leadership and participation in decision-making at all levels, including in politics; and empowering them economically, including guaranteeing equal opportunities for decent work. Gender-responsive implementation also relies on significantly increased investments and support to institutions that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels; robust data; and strengthened monitoring, review and accountability systems.

[2] *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (UN-Women, 2015).

III. Promoting system-wide accountability on gender equality and the empowerment of women

9. In 2015, the fourth year of implementation of the System-wide Action Plan, 64 entities (constituting over 90 per cent of the universe of entities) reported, including the Secretariat and its departments and offices.[3] This represents an increase in Action Plan participation: 62 entities had reported in 2013 and in 2014, and 55 entities in 2012.

10. The 2015 results indicate that the System-wide Action Plan continues to catalyse progress on gender mainstreaming. For the United Nations system, the proportion of ratings indicative of meeting or exceeding requirements increased from 31 to 57 per cent between the first year of reporting, 2012, and 2015 (figure I).

11. Action Plan reporting continued to improve. In 2015, approximately 73 per cent of remedial action plans qualified as satisfactory or better, compared with 66 per cent in 2014. The UN-Women help desk reviewed all reports for quality control and accuracy, suggesting revisions for 40 per cent of them, a decrease of 7 percentage points compared with 2014, and reflecting strengthened understanding of performance requirements. In addition, approximately 70 per cent of recommendations made by the help desk yielded revisions.

12. Further, with particular reference to performance indicator 5, Evaluation,[4] the help desk recommended revisions in only 25 per cent of cases, indicating higher accuracy in reporting. Of those, 37 per cent resulted in altered ratings.

A. Comparative analysis of overall United Nations system performance, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015

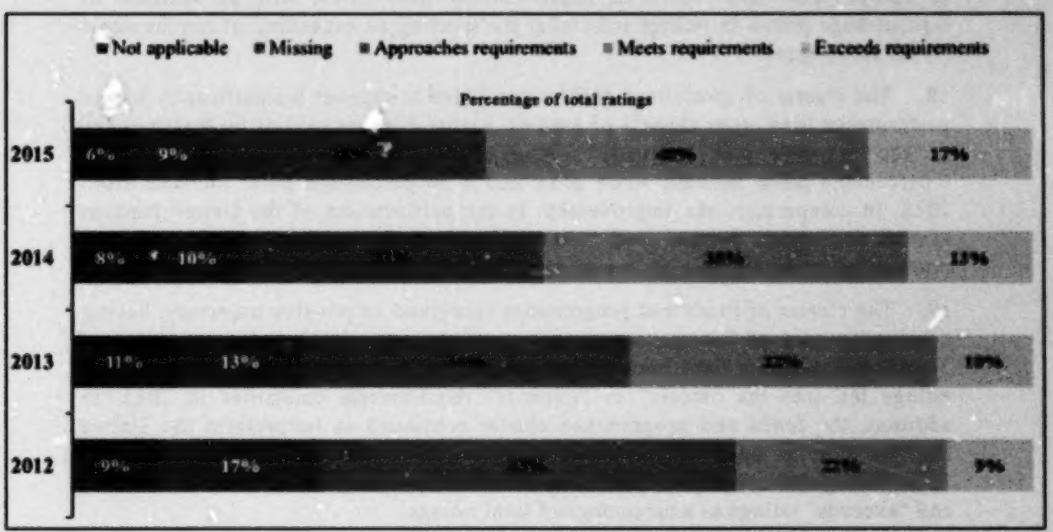
13. In order to gauge trends in performance, the current report compares results by (a) year, (b) performance indicator, (c) entity type[5] and (d) areas of strengths and improvement.

[3] Non-reporting entities included the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development; the International Civil Aviation Organization; the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

[4] The United Nations Evaluation Group manages the help desk for performance indicator 5.

[5] Entities were grouped into categories based on the standard United Nations organizational breakdown: funds and programmes, Secretariat, specialized entities, technical entities, and research and training institutes. The year 2015 is the first in which research and training institutes are grouped separately, owing to the increase in reporting entities within this category.

Figure I
Comparative analysis of overall ratings for the United Nations system, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015



14. Since 2012, overall system-wide performance has steadily improved, with increases in "meets" and "exceeds" ratings and decreases in "missing" and "approaches" ratings (figure I).[6] It is noteworthy that "not applicable" ratings have decreased since 2013, indicating increased acceptance among entities of the relevance of performance indicators to their work.

15. Currently, 57 per cent of all ratings for the United Nations system fall into the "meets" or "exceeds" category, representing an increase of 6 percentage points compared with 2014 and of 26 percentage points compared with 2012, and an average annual growth of almost 9 percentage points. Of all ratings, the "meets" category registered the largest growth, from 22 per cent in 2012 to 40 per cent in 2015. The proportion of ratings in the "exceeds" category nearly doubled between 2012 and 2015, rising from 9 per cent in 2012 to 17 per cent in 2015.

16. While the United Nations system has evidenced steady annual progress in System-wide Action Plan performance, the rate of progress remains insufficient to meet all performance requirements by the 2017 deadline set by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.[7] Projections using the current rate of progress indicate that the United Nations system can expect to achieve "meets" or "exceeds" ratings for all requirements by 2020, three years past the deadline. Further, the rate of progress has declined: in 2013, total "meets" and "exceeds" ratings had increased by 11 percentage points compared with the prior year; in 2014, the amount of the increase dropped to 9 percentage points; and in 2015, the amount of the increase declined further, to 6 percentage points.

[6] Calculations for the United Nations system are based on 960 individual ratings, derived from 64 entities reporting on 15 performance indicators.

[7] Entities with a technical focus have a deadline of 2019 for meeting the requirements.

B. Comparative analysis, by clusters of entity Types

17. As shown in figure II, and consistent with trends of past years, all five clusters of entity types have registered improvements since 2014, with an increase of 4 percentage points in ratings indicating the meeting or exceeding of requirements for all entity types.

18. The cluster of specialized entities continued to register a significantly higher performance than other clusters of entities. Eighty-two per cent of their ratings fell in the "meets" and "exceeds" requirements categories, translating into a 6 percentage point increase since 2014 and a 34 percentage point increase since 2012. In comparison, the improvement in the performance of the United Nations system as regards "meets" and "exceeds" ratings between 2012 and 2015 was represented by an increase of 26 percentage points.

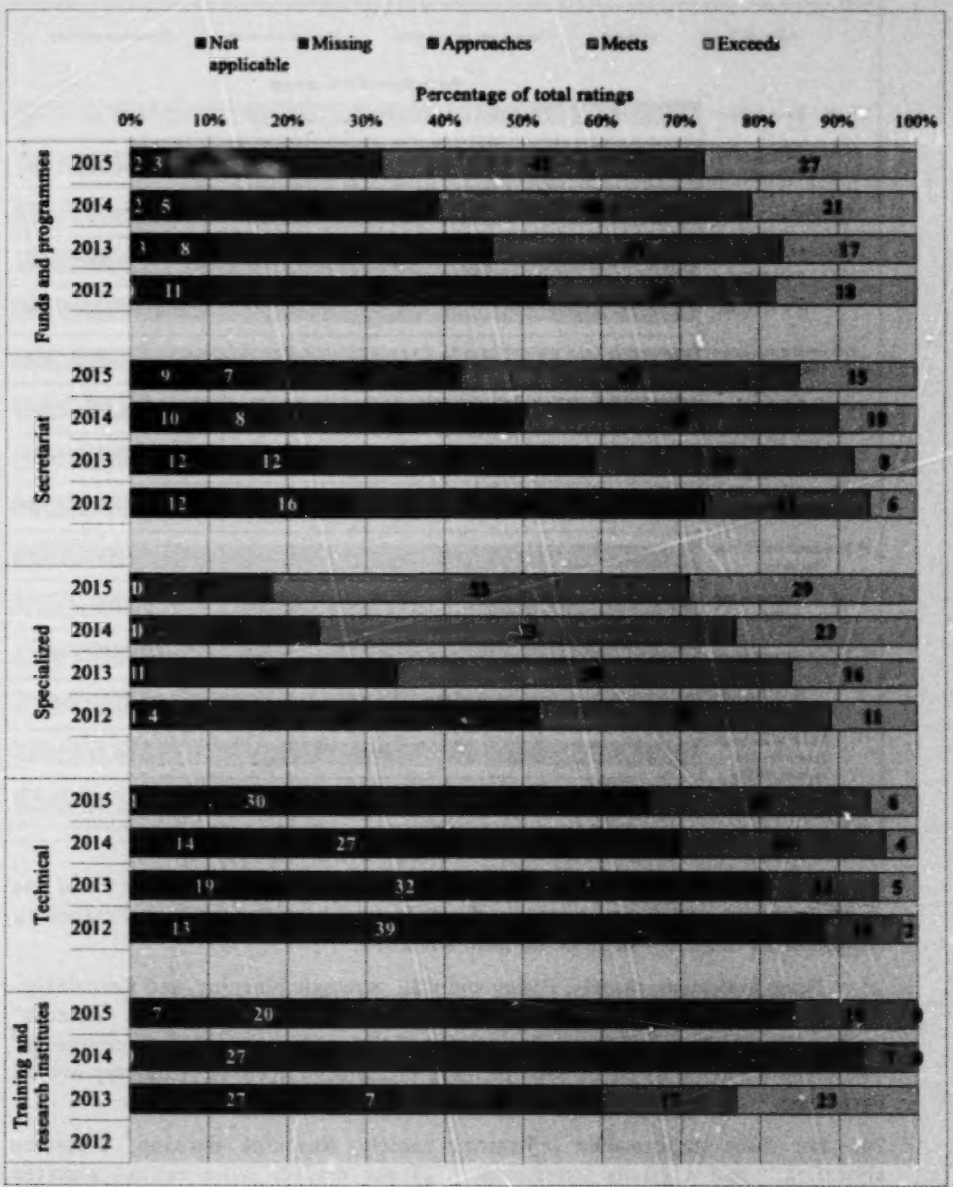
19. The cluster of funds and programmes continued its positive trajectory, having achieved a gain of 7 percentage points annually since 2012 and a total gain of 21 percentage points since baseline reporting in 2012. A total of 68 per cent of their ratings fell into the "meets" or "exceeds" requirements categories in 2015. In addition, the funds and programmes cluster continued to outperform the United Nations system: on average, performance of the United Nations system lags 11 percentage points behind that of the funds and programmes in terms of "meets" and "exceeds" ratings as a percentage of total ratings.

20. The Secretariat has made steady gains since 2012, reporting 58 per cent of all ratings as "meets" or "exceeds" in 2015, up from 27 per cent in 2012, with an increment of 8 percentage points since 2014, representing one of the largest annual gains across clusters. However, similar to previous reporting periods, the Secretariat continues to register a significantly weaker performance in the "exceeds" category compared with the specialized entities and the funds and programmes, trailing the proportion of each of their "exceeds" ratings by at least 10 percentage points.

21. The cluster of entities with a technical focus reported that 34 per cent of all ratings fell into the "meets" and "exceeds" categories. Moreover, this cluster also registered the lowest increase in these categories between 2014 and 2015, in comparison with other entity types, having increased by only 4 percentage points in the "meets" and "exceeds" categories. Noteworthy, however, is that entities with a technical focus reported only 1 per cent of ratings as "not applicable" in 2015, compared with at least 13 per cent in previous years, thereby demonstrating an increased recognition of the relevance of gender mainstreaming to their mandates.

22. In 2015, 16 per cent of all ratings for training and research institutes were in the "met requirements" category, in comparison with 7 per cent in 2014. However, the training and research institute cluster is the only one that did not report any "exceeds" ratings for two years in a row. However, it is encouraging to note that this cluster, despite having registered the weakest performance among all entity types in 2015, reaped the largest gains in the "meets" requirements category compared with 2014, with an increment of 9 percentage points.

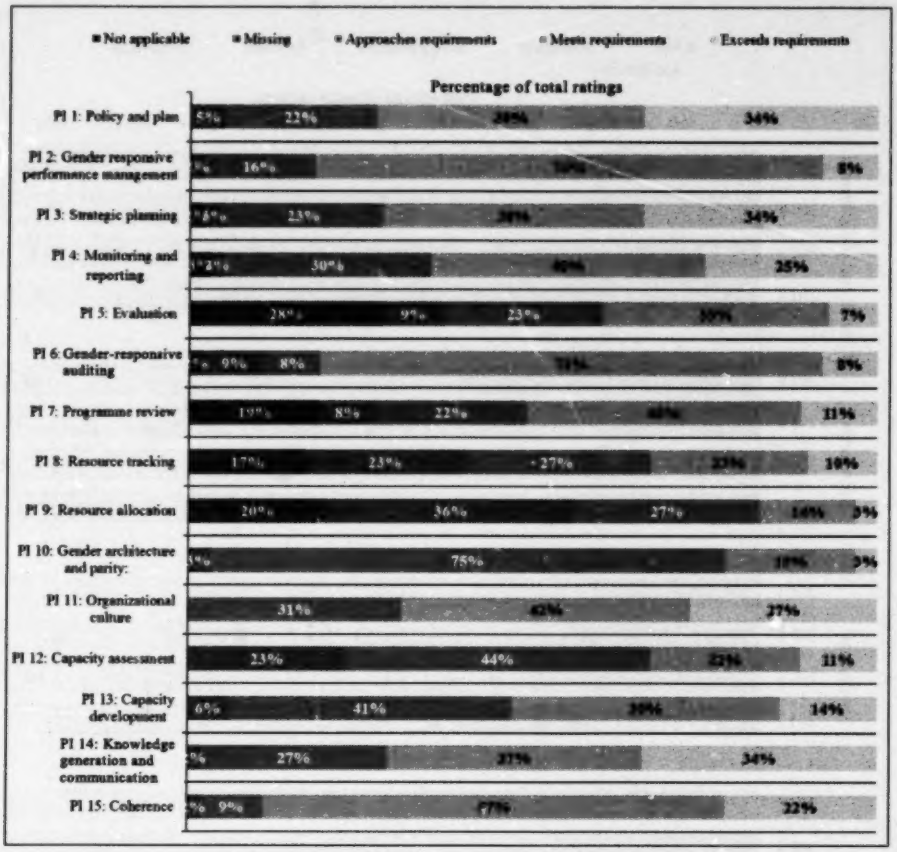
Figure II
Comparative analysis of ratings, by year and entity type



C. Comparative analysis by performance indicator: strengths and areas for improvement

23. Figure III provides a breakdown of ratings for all entities by performance indicator for the current reporting period (2015). Figure IV provides a comparison of "meets" and "exceeds" ratings, by indicator, for all four reporting years.

Figure III
2015 analysis of ratings for the United Nations system, by performance indicator



24. Figure III shows that at least 50 per cent of the ratings for 10 of the 15 performance indicators were in the "meeting requirements" or "exceeding requirements" category in 2015, up from 8 in 2014.

25. Three indicators, namely, Policy and plan, Strategic planning, and Knowledge-generation and communication, evidenced the largest proportion of "exceeds" ratings. For all three indicators, 34 per cent of the entities exceeded requirements.[8] The comprehensive scope of each of these indicators effectively catalyses overall performance across all indicators.

26. For three performance indicators, namely, Resource tracking,[9] Resource allocation,[10] and Capacity assessment,[11] 23 per cent or more entities reported "missing" requirements, indicating that while entities perceive the indicator as

[8] Twenty-two entities per indicator. These numbers and the numbers cited in subsequent footnotes are based on a reference sample of 64 entities.
[9] Twenty-three per cent of entities (15 entities).
[10] Thirty-six per cent of entities (23 entities).
[11] Twenty-three per cent of entities (15 entities).

relevant to their work, more consistent and focused attention is needed to raise performance so as to meet requirements.

27. For four performance indicators, namely, Evaluation,[12] Resource allocation,[13] Programme review,[14] and Resource tracking,[15] 17 per cent or more of the ratings fell in the "not applicable" category, reflecting entities' continued struggle to view those indicators as relevant to their work and mandates.

Figure IV[16]

Comparative analysis of "meets" and "exceeds" ratings by indicator, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015

Performance indicator, ranked by 2015 performance	Percentage of total ratings meeting or exceeding requirements (not applicable omitted)				% Point difference (2015-2014)	% Point difference (2015-2012)
	2015	2014	2013	2012		
PI 15: Coherence	89	87	89	77	2	12
PI 6: Gender-responsive auditing	83	78	69	13	5	70
PI 2: Gender-responsive performance management	83	81	75	59	3	24
PI 1: Policy and plan	73	61	50	40	12	33
PI 3: Strategic planning	73	74	58	41	-1	32
PI 14: Knowledge generation and communication	72	66	52	34	6	38
PI 11: Organizational culture	69	63	59	48	7	21
PI 4: Monitoring and reporting	68	65	50	39	3	29
PI 7: Programme review	63	59	47	31	4	32
PI 5: Evaluation	55	50	44	36	5	19
PI 13: Capacity development	53	40	25	23	13	30
PI 8: Resource tracking	39	30	25	22	9	17
PI 12: Capacity assessment	33	28	23	15	5	18
PI 10: Gender architecture and parity	22	21	20	13	1	9
PI 9: Resource allocation	22	18	13	7	4	15

Strengths

2015 results

28. Figure IV shows that the United Nations system registered progress against 14 of the 15 performance indicators. Strategic planning was the only indicator for which there was a decline in the proportion of "meets" and "exceeds" ratings,

[12] Twenty-eight per cent of entities (18 entities).
[13] Twenty per cent of entities (13 entities).
[14] Nineteen per cent of entities (12 entities).
[15] Seventeen per cent of entities (11 entities).
[16] So that strengths and areas for improvement could be presented more accurately, percentages in figure IV were calculated omitting "not applicable" ratings. Therefore, percentages for "meets" and "exceeds" will differ slightly from those presented in figure I, which bases percentages on all ratings, "not applicable" included.

resulting from a decrease in the number of entities rating this indicator as "not applicable", from 5 in 2014 to 1 in 2015.[17]

29. In 2015, 41 of the 64 reporting United Nations entities, or 64 per cent, met or exceeded at least 50 per cent or more of the performance requirements for gender mainstreaming, up from 13 per cent in 2012.

30. The coherence indicator registered the best performance among all 15 System-wide Action Plan indicators for the fourth year in a row and system-wide performance remains the highest in this area. In 2015, 89 per cent of entities met or exceeded requirements for this indicator.[18] Notably, the 7 percentage point increase in the proportion of entities in the "exceeds" category, from 15 per cent (9 entities) in 2014 to 22 per cent (14 entities) in 2015, signalled an increase in the number of entities conducting System-wide Action Plan peer reviews.

31. Following closely behind the coherence performance indicator, gender-responsive auditing and gender-responsive performance management registered the second- and third-highest levels of compliance, with 83 per cent of all entities reporting in the "meets" or "exceeds" ratings, up from 78 per cent and 81 per cent, respectively, in 2014.

32. Eighty-three per cent of entities[19] met or exceeded the requirements under the performance management indicator, up slightly from 81 per cent[20] in 2014 and up significantly from 59 per cent[21] in 2012. Secretariat-wide compliance accounted for the initial surge of 16 percentage points between 2012 and 2013, which has been sustained for the past two reporting periods. Additionally, in 2015, to enhance coherence and increase performance in this area, the UN-Women Training Centre developed guidance to assist United Nations system staff and managers in developing gender-sensitive competencies.

Progress between baseline reporting and the current reporting period: 2012-2015

33. Since the roll-out of the System-wide Action Plan in 2012, the area of gender-responsive auditing has made the most significant gains, with a 70 percentage point increase in the "meets" and "exceeds" ratings between 2012 and 2015.[22]

34. In addition, the following indicators all witnessed an increase of 30 percentage points or more in the "meeting" and "exceeding" ratings: Auditing, Knowledge generation and communication, Policy and plan, Programme review, Strategic planning, and Capacity development (figure IV).

[17] Because "not applicable" ratings are omitted from calculations of strengths and weaknesses, the percentages for "meets" and "exceeds" will change as "not applicable" ratings increase or decrease. The number of entities rated as meeting requirements for this indicator remained the same between 2014 and 2015. Four additional entities were rated as exceeding requirements between 2014 and 2015. Results for the strategic planning indicator appear to attest to a slight decrease in performance in 2015 because the base number of entities increased by six: four additional entities that no longer rated this indicator as "not applicable" and two additional reporting entities for 2015.

[18] Fifty-seven entities.

[19] Fifty-two entities.

[20] Forty-nine entities.

[21] Thirty-two entities.

[22] Or an increase from 7 to 53 entities.

Progress between the previous and current reporting periods: 2014-2015

35. In the most recent reporting period, 2014-2015, the areas of capacity development, policy and plan, and resource tracking registered the greatest gains, i.e., 9 percentage points or higher, in terms of "meets" and "exceeds" ratings.

36. Among the top three, the capacity development indicator had registered the greatest progress since 2014, with an increase of 13 percentage points in the "meets" or "exceeds" categories. Fifty-three per cent of entities[23] currently meet or exceed requirements. Much of this improvement can be attributed to the uptake of the UN-Women "I Know Gender" e-course for non-gender specialists. By March 2016, 10,472 staff of reporting entities had completed the online self-paced course.[24] The course is mandatory for staff in 14 entities. Ten additional entities including the Secretariat, accounting for approximately 40 per cent of all global United Nations staff, have committed to making the course mandatory in 2016, with a view to better equipping the United Nations system to deliver on gender mainstreaming mandates.

37. Significantly, 73 per cent of all reporting entities[25] met or exceeded the requirements for the gender policy indicator in 2015, an increase of 12 percentage points from 61 per cent[26] in 2014. An additional eight entities committed to developing or implementing policies in 2016, suggesting a compliance rate of 85 per cent of all United Nations entities by the end of 2016. This is particularly significant. Gender policies and plans continue to be one of the strongest drivers of change. Entities with gender policies markedly outperform those without them: the 47 entities meeting or exceeding the gender policy indicator requirement are, on average, meeting or exceeding the requirements under 10 out of 15 indicators, compared with an average of 5 indicators for entities without gender policies.

38. Resource tracking registered the third highest increment in the "meets" and "exceeds" requirements categories between 2014 and 2015, with an increase of 9 percentage points, from 30 to 39 per cent. In 2015, 21 entities, or 33 per cent of reporting entities, used gender equality markers, while another 16 reported working towards adopting resource tracking mechanisms. "Missing" and "not applicable" ratings decreased by a combined 5 percentage points between 2014 and 2015, pointing to an improved understanding of resource tracking for gender equality. Significantly, of the 11 entities that rated this indicator as "not applicable", 9 are Secretariat departments. Further, similar to 2014, 8 out of 33 Secretariat departments stated that tracking resources for gender equality and the empowerment of women should be conducted centrally through a common platform.

Areas for improvement

39. In 2015, as in 2014, resource allocation, gender architecture and parity, and capacity assessment, in that order, registered as the poorest performance areas for the United Nations system. Thirty-five per cent or less of the entities reported "meeting" or "exceeding" requirements.

40. While resource allocation registered the weakest performance of all System-wide Action Plan indicators, it notably reversed the negative trend of all three prior

[23] Thirty-four entities.
[24] UN-Women Training Centre.
[25] Forty-seven entities.
[26] Thirty-seven entities.

years, having witnessed a 4 percentage point gain in the "meets" and "exceeds" categories between 2014 and 2015. Additionally, remedial activities related to resource allocation were included under approximately 28 per cent of remedial plans in 2015, indicating the potential for stronger incremental progress in this area for 2016 and 2017.

41. Gender architecture and parity remains a particularly weak area across the United Nations system, tied with resource allocation as the poorest-performing indicator, with 22 per cent of entities[27] meeting or exceeding requirements for this indicator in 2015. Particularly disconcerting is the very slow rate of progress with respect to this indicator (which is not the case for Resource allocation), as evidenced by a 1 percentage point increase from 2014 to 2015, on a par with the previous reporting year. With this current rate of progress, the system will not meet the targets for this indicator until 2041, 24 years after the deadline set for 2017. Impediments to progress in this area are best understood by examining the indicator's three components:

(a) *Gender focal point systems*. Almost 94 per cent[28] of entities have a gender focal point or equivalent in place, representing a 2 percentage point increase from 2014. However, only 66 per cent[29] have gender focal points at the P-4 level and above. As repeatedly indicated, lack of seniority strongly correlates with limited access to senior management. In 2015, 72 per cent[30] established terms of reference for gender focal points. This marks an increase of 6 percentage points from 2014. The percentage of entities in which gender focal points devote 20 per cent or more of their time to functions related to gender equality remained unchanged, at 47 per cent (corresponding to 30 entities), between 2014 and 2015. This points to the permanent issue of competing demands on the allocation of the time of designated gender focal points;

(b) *Equal representation of women at all levels*. Progress towards achieving equal representation of women remains slow. Echoing results from 2013 and 2014, 83 per cent of entities reported not having achieved an equal representation of women at the P-4 level and above. The results illustrate that to counteract the existing inverse relationship between seniority and the representation of women represents a persisting challenge for the United Nations system;

(c) *Adequate resourcing*. Almost 33 per cent[31] reported having a fully resourced gender unit or the equivalent. Despite this encouraging increase, the continued lack of the human and financial resources needed to achieve gender equality can undermine the rate of progress across all indicators, especially in areas that pose more entrenched challenges.

42. The area of capacity assessment saw little progress between 2014 and 2015: only 33 per cent of entities[32] achieved met or exceeded requirements ratings, up from 28 per cent in 2014. More positively, capacity assessment constituted the area most widely targeted by entities for enhancing performance in 2016. Thirty-one entities noted that they expect to undertake capacity assessment activities in 2016.

[27] Fourteen entities.
[28] Sixty entities.
[29] Forty-two entities.
[30] Forty-six entities.
[31] Twenty-one entities.
[32] Twenty-one entities.

Additionally, significant progress will likely be made through the systematic application and adaptation of the UN-Women Training Centre capacity assessment tool across the system.

D. Remedial action plans

43. Remedial action plans, articulated in terms of timelines, responsibility for follow-up action and resources required to achieve progress, delineate the steps that entities plan to take to improve performance on each indicator.

44. Given the 2017 deadline to meet or exceed requirements for all System-wide Action Plan indicators, the number of actions designed to improve performance, as outlined by all entities, continued to increase, from 91 in 2013 to 170 in 2014 and to 175 in 2015. Similar to all prior years, capacity assessment, capacity development and resource tracking constitute the areas most targeted for enhanced activity by entities. Other areas of focus include gender architecture and parity, as well as resource allocation. Additionally, in 80 per cent of cases where information was provided, staff other than the gender focal point or unit were designated as responsible for follow-up action, signalling a continued broadening of the web of engagement and responsibility for gender mainstreaming within entities.

45. Entities identified the resources required to further improve performance. Similar to 2014, they estimated that a total of approximately US$ 18.8 million would be required. In 2015, similar to 2013 and 2014, the largest share of resources (23 per cent of the overall required resources) was required for the area of gender architecture and parity, followed by policy and plan (14 per cent), resource allocation (12 per cent) and capacity development (9 per cent).

46. Conclusions related to the current period of System-wide Action Plan implementation include the following:

(a) Leadership at the highest levels remains an essential condition for progress towards and realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women: 68 per cent of entities stated that senior management commitment constituted one of the chief drivers for positive change. This being the case, enhanced accountability for demonstrated commitment of senior managers to gender equality and the empowerment of women is needed;

(b) Adequate human and financial resources to support gender mainstreaming within and across entities undergird any reasonable expectation for progress. In 2015, 32 per cent of entities stated that lack of sufficient resources for gender equality constituted one of the greatest impediments to progress, up 8 percentage points since 2014. Without intensified efforts and appropriate human and financial investments in areas such as gender architecture and parity, organizational culture and resource allocation, the system's overall rate of progress towards implementation of the System-wide Action Plan framework will stagnate or decline;

(c) The articulation, promulgation and implementation of gender policies significantly drive progress in gender mainstreaming. A strengthened focus on their implementation is necessary to ensure that policies continue to catalyse results across all indicators;

(d) Gender architecture and parity continues to be one of the worst-performing areas across the United Nations system. Particularly disconcerting is the decreasing rate of progress. Based on current trends, and without intensified, focused and effective efforts, the United Nations system is projected to reach the targets for this indicator in 2041.

47. Suggested next steps to ensure that the United Nations system meets all requirements by 2017 include:

(a) Continued development and updating of gender policies and plans aligned to the System-wide Action Plan, including common implementation approaches for key Action Plan indicators;

(b) Significant financial and staff investment, including through targeted policy development and implementation, as necessary, to accelerate progress in achieving the equal representation of women, especially through systematic application of temporary special measures, as mandated under article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;[33] flexible work arrangements; facilitative policies; setting of more ambitious targets for women's representation; and increased accountability of senior management for reaching them;

(c) Harmonization of gender marker systems and enhanced implementation capacity, including through a gender marker help desk, development of training materials, embedding tracking mechanisms into common platforms, including Umoja, and common approaches for small and technical entities;

(d) Implementation of mandatory introductory gender equality courses for all staff and strengthened application of gender capacity assessment tools;

(e) Intensified and systematic knowledge sharing for all System-wide Action Plan indicators, including through strengthening of the knowledge hub;

(f) Increased entity-to-entity peer reviews of System-wide Action Plan reports to strengthen quality and accuracy of reporting, knowledge sharing and lessons learned.

IV. Gender mainstreaming in operational activities

48. The present section focuses on the progress and achievements of the United Nations development system in mainstreaming gender into its operational activities. It draws on data from the United Nations Development Group Information Management System and the UN-Women results management system as well as secondary sources.[34]

A. Strengthening operational coherence for gender equality and the empowerment of women

49. Multiple inter-agency coordination mechanisms and common country planning instruments constitute conduits for gender mainstreaming in United Nations

[33] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[34] See footnote 1 concerning data limitations.

operational activities. At country level, the most common among these are gender (or gender-related) theme groups. In 2015, United Nations country teams reported on the presence of 71 gender theme groups as well as 26 inter-agency groups which had a combined and integrated focus on gender and human rights or in relation to a United Nations Development Assistance Framework outcome. This trend reflects the increasing understanding of the strong links between gender equality and positive development outcomes overall within United Nations country teams.

50. Gender theme groups provided strategic policy, technical and capacity-building support for the operations of the United Nations country teams vis-à-vis analytical work, strategic priority setting and development, implementation and monitoring of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The gender theme group in Brazil proved instrumental in highlighting the intersections of gender, race and ethnicity issues, positioning and mainstreaming these overlapping issues within the proposed results of the Development Assistance Framework 2017-2021. In Tajikistan, the gender theme group contributed to policy dialogues on gender and water management, engendering disaster risk reduction, and women's economic empowerment, which resulted in substantive guidance for mainstreaming gender into United Nations operational activities in those areas.

51. Along the same lines, a regional inter-agency working group on gender in Europe and Central Asia was established in 2015 to strengthen gender mainstreaming across the Sustainable Development Goals. The working group focused on supporting intergovernmental processes; providing integrated policy advice and support to regional- and country-level coordination mechanisms; improving knowledge generation and dissemination; and advancing strategies for joint programming and joint advocacy, supported by regional resource mobilization efforts.

52. Gender theme groups also supported national partners in translating internationally agreed normative commitments on gender equality into policies and plans. In Turkey, the gender theme group contributed to both the National Gender Equality Action Plan and the National Action Plan on Ending Violence against Women. In Colombia, the gender theme group facilitated the participation of two delegations of gender experts and a mission of 10 representatives of women's organizations in the Havana peace talks, which led to the inclusion of gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence in the peace agreements. Coordinated technical support from UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) contributed to the design of the first-ever national domestic violence survey in Kazakhstan.

53. As a key driver of United Nations system coordination and coherence, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks have demonstrated an increasing focus on gender equality, both as a priority area and as an area mainstreamed across other outcome areas. More than 60 per cent of Development Assistance Frameworks feature specific results on gender equality.[35] In the United Republic of Tanzania, 3 of the 12 outcomes of the United Nations Assistance Plan (2016-2021) address gender equality with respect to improved access to quality nutrition services, women's increased political participation, and strengthened prevention of and response to violence against women. In Georgia, the United Nations country team mainstreamed gender throughout all priority areas of the United Nations Partnership

[35] See footnote 1.

for Sustainable Development (2016-2020) and included indicators designed to enable better tracking of expenditures per results and per agency.

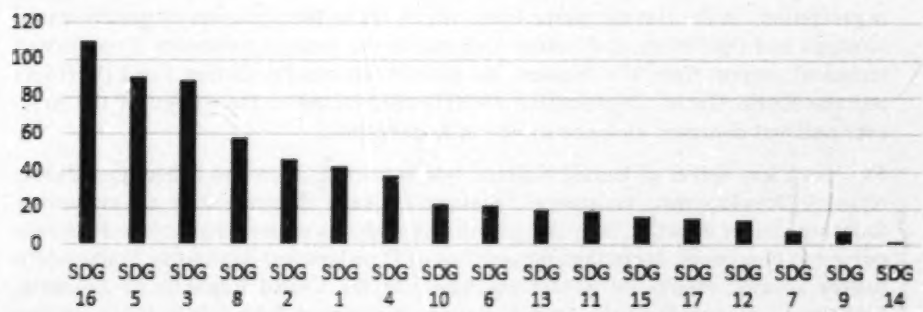
54. The United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks also reinforce linkages between normative and operational aspects of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A recent publication of eight country case studies highlighted how United Nations country teams, through joint programming, integrated international norms and standards, including on gender equality, into their operational activities in different country contexts.[36] In Albania, integrating normative commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in common country programming guided the United Nations country team support provided to a national process of legislative reform designed to remove gender discriminatory provisions from existing laws.[37]

55. Increasingly. United Nations country teams are supporting the efforts of Governments to fulfil their reporting obligations to other United Nations human rights mechanisms, including through the universal periodic review of human rights. In El Salvador, UN-Women supported the Government's preparation for the universal periodic review of human rights by developing recommendations on women's human rights, violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV which were in line with obligations and commitments under international human rights law.

56. Joint programmes constitute another important coherence and coordination instrument used to strengthen normative and operational linkages on gender equality a..d enhance United Nations joint efforts to deliver transformative results for women and girls. As indicated in figure V, gender equality, is the second Sustainable Development Goals-related area of choice (promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies is the first), with more than 90 joint programmes under implementation.[38] These joint programmes address issues such as violence against women, political participation, peace and security, food security and nutrition, economic empowerment, climate change and access to sustainable energy.

Figure V

Number of joint programmes addressing Sustainable Development Goals-related issues



Source: United Nations Development Group Information Management System.

[36] "Eight case studies on integrating the United Nations' normative and operational work", a study commissioned by the United Nations Development Group (September 2015).

[37] Ibid.

[38] United Nations Development Group Information Management System.

57. In 2015, UN-Women developed 12 flagship programmes to leverage its normative, operational and coordination mandate with the driving principles under "Delivering as one". Backed by theories of change and an articulation of causal linkages and actions, these initiatives aim at providing a programmatic platform for United Nations joint action on gender equality and the empowerment of women within the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

58. The joint efforts of the entities of the United Nations development system enabled integrated approaches to addressing national gender equality priorities and produced stronger results at country level. In the Republic of Moldova, United Nations joint efforts on increasing women's political participation led to a 13 per cent increase in the number of women elected as local councillors and a 7 per cent increase in the number of women mayors. In Mozambique, joint United Nations efforts contributed to the national strategy to end child marriage, which has been endorsed by the Council of Ministers.

B. Mainstreaming gender equality into peacebuilding and humanitarian responses

59. Significant efforts were made towards mainstreaming gender into peacebuilding and humanitarian responses, including disaster risk reduction, in this reporting period. In 21 countries,[39] UN-Women participated in post-conflict or post-disaster needs assessments; formulated joint action plans; conducted advocacy with cluster/humanitarian coordination mechanisms; and strengthened linkages among the humanitarian, development and peace pillars.

60. Through technical leadership, UN-Women supported gender impact analyses with respect to post-conflict and post-disaster needs assessments, which influenced the design of gender-responsive humanitarian interventions.[40] In Myanmar, Nepal and Vanuatu, technical support resulted in the prioritization of women's leadership and gender-responsive allocations of resources for infrastructure and livelihoods in humanitarian action plans. The post-disaster needs assessment in Vanuatu was the first in the Pacific region to analyse gender impacts in each sector and to identify humanitarian actions based on the differential needs of women and men.

61. In Nepal, under the leadership of the office of the Resident Coordinator, the task force on conflict-related sexual violence, which has brought together the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN-Women, undertook a mapping of laws on sexual and gender-based violence and supported an interministerial round table to address the issue. These activities contributed to a commitment by the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction to develop a second phase of the national action plan on Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008).

[39] Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cameroon, Colombia, Guatemala, Jordan, Iraq, Liberia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Sudan, Ukraine, Vanuatu, Zimbabwe and the State of Palestine.

[40] Bangladesh, Burundi, Cambodia, Liberia, Nepal, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Vanuatu.

62. Development activities are becoming an integral part of building resilience against disasters and violent conflicts, and support peacekeeping, peacebuilding and humanitarian interventions.[41] In Jordan, the United Nations country team aligned the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2015-2017) with the Jordan Response Plan, joining humanitarian and development responses under one comprehensive national plan. Through a partnership with the Ministry of Social Development, UN-Women is positioned to mainstream gender into the United Nations country team resilience vision. In Guatemala, the United Nations country team aligned the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2015-2019) with the national peace accords. Pursuant thereto, it incorporated women, peace and security indicators on gender justice and women's leadership, particularly women's representation and the equal involvement of women in economic recovery.

C. Strategic advocacy and joint communications on gender equality

63. Sixty-eight per cent of United Nations country teams have joint United Nations communication groups and 54 per cent have joint communications strategies in place.[42] These inter-agency mechanisms facilitate coherent messaging and joint advocacy and enhance the visibility of the leadership of United Nations country teams in strategic areas, including gender equality and the empowerment of women.

64. The Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" continued to serve as a system-wide platform for strategic advocacy and coherent communications on gender equality and the empowerment of women. In 2015, United Nations communication groups mobilized the efforts of United Nations entities to strengthen political will and raise awareness and resources for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls.

65. Other joint United Nations strategic advocacy campaigns on gender equality and the empowerment of women focused on disseminating the outcomes and key messages of the twenty-year national and global reviews of the Beijing Platform for Action[43] and the global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) as well as supported other global, regional and national initiatives. In India, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO supported the Government in the convening of the global "Call to Action" Summit 2015 aimed at generating momentum for and commitment to the updated Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health launched by the Secretary-General. The Summit concluded with the adoption by 22 ministers of health and heads of national delegations of the Delhi Declaration on ending preventable maternal and child deaths.

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[41] See the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (2016).

[42] United Nations Development Group Information Management System baseline survey, 2015.

[43] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

D. Capacity development

66. The United Nations development system continued to take measures to enhance capacity development for gender mainstreaming, which remains a foundation for progress. Twenty-two United Nations country teams reinforced staff capacities in gender mainstreaming.[44] In Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mali, Pakistan and Zimbabwe, for example, gender theme groups developed gender mainstreaming strategies and trained focal points on how to integrate gender equality considerations into United Nations Development Assistance Framework development and implementation.

67. Notably, United Nations humanitarian country teams strengthened their work on capacity development for gender mainstreaming. In Pakistan, the United Nations humanitarian country team, together with the National Disaster Management Authority, trained front-line service providers in responding to disasters, including the application of a gender marker to their work. As a result, the strategic response plan was able to integrate a strong component analysing the differential needs of women, men, boys and girls. In the State of Palestine, the deployment of a Gender Adviser to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ensured the designation of a gender focal point for each humanitarian cluster, mainstreamed gender into the terms of reference and expanded outreach to women's organizations. In Ukraine, the support provided by the Inter-Agency Gender Adviser on Humanitarian Action to a multi-stakeholder consultation allowed the United Nations humanitarian country team to strengthen the integration of gender equality and women's rights into future humanitarian response planning and actions.

68. Furthermore, to enhance the systematic integration of gender equality into humanitarian responses, UNFPA, UNICEF and other international organizations updated the Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action to strengthen the coordination, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of essential actions for the prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence across all sectors of humanitarian response. UN-Women and Oxfam are also co-leading efforts to revise the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Handbook for Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action.

69. Regional United Nations Development Groups led capacity development efforts towards supporting United Nations country teams in mainstreaming gender into the localization, implementation and monitoring of the new sustainable development agenda in common country and national planning processes. In Asia, training courses for resident coordinators and gender theme groups were held in countries rolling out United Nations Development Assistance Framework. In Europe and Central Asia, the regional United Nations Development Group organized a training-of-trainers programme to increase the number of gender experts in the United Nations development Group gender roster with the ability to support gender mainstreaming efforts at country level.

70. At global level, the United Nations Development Group Resource Book for Mainstreaming Gender in UN Common Programming at the Country Level was translated into French and Spanish, and made available to all United Nations country teams as a means of supporting capacity development initiatives. The

[44] United Nations Development Group Information Management System.

United Nations Development Group also issued an interim reference guide to United Nations country teams on mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level and a guidance note on human rights for resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, both of which address gender equality issues and provide relevant tools and resources.

E. Financing for gender equality

71. Making gender equality and the empowerment of women a reality requires significantly increased financing and dedicated funding to close resource gaps. The efforts related to allocation and tracking of gender-related resources remain ad hoc and limited. The inclusion of gender outcomes and outputs in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework has not necessarily translated into increased resources. In fact, a recent review found a worrying decline in the number of specific budgets for gender equality and the empowerment of women.[45]

72. Building on the independent evaluation of the "Delivering as one" pilot phase, which found that delivering as one increases coherence of the United Nations development system on gender equality and the empowerment of women,[46] the United Nations Development Group Standard Operating Procedures for the second generation of delivering as one are guided by the principles of common delivery of results and strengthened accountability on cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, highlighting the key role of common budgetary frameworks and joint mobilization strategies within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

73. Within the United Nations Development Group, a key criterion for performance-based allocations of the One Fund is related to the strengthened linkage between normative and operational work and the integration of United Nations programming principles, including gender equality. Of the 19 United Nations country teams with One Funds, 15 reported allocating resources for gender equality; however, the proportions of those allocations vary widely, ranging from a high of 75 per cent to a low of 2 per cent.[47]

74. Common budgetary frameworks within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework support greater coherence and alignment between gender equality results and resources. The use of gender-responsive budgeting and the development of joint funding approaches and resource mobilization strategies within the United Nations country teams have not systematically produced increased budgets for gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework or One Programme. Moreover, country teams need to track more consistently the proportion of funds allocated for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as related expenditures.

[45] See UNDG, "UNCT performance indicators for gender equality and the empowerment of women: desk review 2012-2014" (18 June 2015).
[46] Independent evaluation of Delivering as One, 2012.
[47] UNDG Information Management System, 2015.

F. Data related to gender equality

75. The effective implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals require strong national capacity to systematically design, collect and ensure access to high-quality, reliable and timely data disaggregated by sex, age and income and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. In this regard, nearly 88 per cent of United Nations country teams (116 out of 132) report that they provide support for national statistical capacities.[48]

76. In Malaysia, the United nations country team supported the Government in its efforts to collect data and fill data gaps for early age of marriage, gender-based violence, wage disparities between men and women, citizenship rights and women's access to justice as well as the impact on women's rights of rising religious conservatism. Those data will inform the development of the national implementation framework for the Sustainable Development Goals.

77. Regionally, a partnership between the National Statistics Institute and National Women's Institute of Mexico, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and UN-Women spearheaded efforts to create a knowledge platform on gender statistics designed to inform evidence-based policymaking in the region. Nineteen countries implemented time-use surveys on women's time allocations, including for unpaid care work. The data fuelled evidence-based policies designed to support women's economic integration.

G. Accountability for gender equality and the empowerment of women

78. Accountability for achieving gender equality results at country level is supported by the use of the United Nations country team performance indicators on gender equality and the empowerment of women (the "scorecard"), introduced in 2008. The scorecard assesses country team performance on gender mainstreaming and supports strategic planning and prioritization of interventions.

79. Thirty-nine scorecard exercises had been completed by the end of 2014,[49] with approximately 10 more initiated in 2015. In Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the scorecard assisted the United Nations country teams in establishing a minimum threshold of actions for gender equality in the context of those countries' United Nations Development Assistance Framework planning cycles and the 2030 Agenda.

80. Increasingly, United Nations country teams are developing management responses to implement scorecard findings and recommendations (e.g., in Maldives, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam). These good practices highlight how country teams implement their commitment to mainstreaming gender into planning, programming, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation and to supporting a shift towards more comprehensive and joint programming approaches to addressing gender inequalities.

[48] UNDG Information Management System.

[49] "UNCT performance indicators for gender equality and the empowerment of women: desk review 2012-2014".

81. According to a United Nations Development Group global review, the performance of United Nations country teams varies across scorecard dimensions and regions. While there have been improvements in the areas of planning, programming and partnerships and decision-making, progress in budgeting and country team capacities remains weak.[50] These findings are consistent with trends reported by individual United Nations entities through the System-wide Action Plan.

V. Gaps and challenges

82. Despite progress in achieving greater system-wide coherence on gender equality and the empowerment of women and in strengthening the coordination of gender-responsive operational activities at country level, gaps do remain.

83. Achieving transformative results for all women and girls, as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda, demands a United Nations system that provides integrated support across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. While United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks consistently evidence an increasing focus on gender equality outcomes and outputs, they do not systematically demonstrate a shift from a siloed approach towards more effective joint action for gender mainstreaming by the United Nations development system.

84. The capacities of United Nations country teams to mainstream gender into development planning, implementation, reporting and monitoring and evaluation as well as into data collection and analysis remain suboptimal. To date, country teams continue to overemphasize individual training to the detriment of more comprehensive and longer-term capacity development approaches.

85. Inadequate allocation of financial resources poses a risk to the efforts of the United Nations development system to deliver on the gender equality commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The absence of a shared methodology for tracking financial allocations and expenditures for gender equality within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework limits the ability of United Nations country teams to identify and commit to specific targets.

86. Limited or lack of national data disaggregation by sex, ethnicity, age, disability and other factors constrains United Nations country team capacity to understand and monitor inequalities and to track progress on gender equality targets and goals within the context of the 2030 Agenda. Intensified support for the production of gender statistics remains fundamental for supporting and monitoring evidence-based implementation of global and national commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

87. Member States consistently rank gender equality as the second most significant area within which the contributions of the United Nations development system are greatly valued.[51] Progress with respect to the System-wide Action Plan

[50] Ibid.

[51] Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (2016).

and the operational activities of the United Nations development system demonstrates that United Nations entities are mainstreaming gender and the empowerment of women more systematically and effectively at an institutional level as well as into policies and programmes, including through strengthened coordination mechanisms at the global, regional and national levels.

88. The creation of the universal, transformative and integrated framework of the new agenda has triggered a clarion call for ambitious change, requiring the collective engagement of all stakeholders in realizing new and existing commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Achieving greater United Nations system-wide coherence on gender equality and the empowerment of women at all levels remains critical to eradicating poverty, eliminating inequalities, sustaining inclusive economic growth and achieving sustainable development. The integrated manner in which gender equality considerations are articulated in the 2030 Agenda reflects both the elevation of gender mainstreaming to a high priority and the fact that it is central to the implementation and achievement of all of the Sustainable Development Goals.

89. The Economic and Social Council may wish to request the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies and funds and programmes, to consider the following actions:

(a) Ensure a strong emphasis on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the General Assembly resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operation activities for development of the United Nations system in order to advance progress on gender mainstreaming within the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) Ensure and promote full compliance with the requirements for all System-wide Action Plan performance indicators by all entities of the United Nations system;

(c) Intensify investments to address issues in critical areas of the System-wide Action Plan, including policy development, resource tracking and allocation, the equal representation of women, including organizational culture, and capacity development and assessment;

(d) Scale up resources to deliver on gender equality goals and targets across the 2030 Agenda, including through enhanced common budgetary frameworks, joint funding mechanisms and joint mobilization efforts;

(e) Harmonize gender marker systems and enhance system-wide capacity for their implementation, including through tracking resource allocations and expenditures by United Nations country teams within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

(f) Accelerate and strengthen gender mainstreaming into normative and operational work aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals as well as across the development, humanitarian and peace and security pillars supported by the United Nations system;

(g) Continue to align and adapt new United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks to the transformative demands of the new sustainable development agenda and national development priorities, including through incorporating

dedicated outcomes on gender equality and mainstreaming a gender perspective across other key strategic areas;

(h) Increase investments to enhance operational coherence, capacity and expertise of United Nations country teams in order to mainstream gender systematically and comprehensively into country-level common programming frameworks, particularly United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (or their equivalents);

(i) Increase technical and financial investments in order to enable the building of national statistical capacity for gender statistics and the collection and analysis of data disaggregated by sex, age, geographical factors, income and other indicators at national, regional and international levels;

(j) Ensure further complementarity of United Nations accountability systems for gender equality and the empowerment of women, specifically through enhanced linkages of the System-wide Action Plan and gender scorecard, and expand their scope to encompass a greater focus on results related to the Sustainable Development Goals;

(k) Support the efforts of Member States, upon their request, to fully utilize and leverage the knowledge and expertise of the United Nations development system on gender mainstreaming in an integrated and "whole-of-system" manner which draws on the mandates and contributions of all United Nations entities to achieve the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.